

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 SAJ-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 TRSE-00 /076 W

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R 170617Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 952

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0570

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XG, UR, BU

SUBJ: SOVIET DILEMMA IN BALKANS?

REF: (A) STATE 46523; (B) MOSCOW 3562; (C) USNATO 1357

1. IF REFTELS A AND B ARE TO BECOME SUBJECT OF
DISCUSSION IN NATO POLADS AS PER REF C, PERHAPS THE
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FOLLOWING VIEWS FROM SOFIA MIGHT BE INCLUDED.

2. FROM WHERE WE SIT, WE ARE UNABLE TO DETECT IN PRACTICAL TERMS FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE EVEN A "SMALL" DILEMMA, LET ALONE A QUANDARY OR SPECTRE, IN USSR-BULGARIAN RELATIONS AS REGARDS THE BALKANS. EVEN WITH CAREFULLY COUCHED QUALIFIERS OF REFS A AND B, WE FEEL THEY CONVEY AN EXAGGERATED PICTURE. BULGARIA FOR VERY VALID REASONS AND FOR DEFINITE BENEFITS CAREFULLY ALIGNS ITS POLICY AND ACTIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AND AS REF B CORRECTLY NOTES, BULGARIANS THUS HAVE NEITHER DESIRE NOR INCENTIVE TO SEPARATE THEMSELVES IN ANY WAY FROM THEIR SOVIET SPONSORS. BENEFITS FROM MORE FORMALIZED BALKAN COOPERATION WOULD SEEM INFINITESIMAL IN COMPARISON.

3. THE PLAIN FACT IS THAT IN MOST AREAS WHERE REGIONAL COOPERATION MAKES SENSE, IT ALREADY IS UNDER WAY ON A BILATERAL BASIS. FAR FROM BEING ISOLATED; BULGARIA MAINTAINS ACTIVE AND GROWING RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF YUGOSLAVIA, ALTHOUGH EVEN THERE THE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES DO NOT SEEM TO IMPAIR ECONOMIC RELATIONS.) IN FACT, EVEN WHILE NEGATIVE ON INSTITUTIONALIZING REGIONAL COOPERATION, BULGARIA IS INTENSIFYING--WITH EVIDENT RUSSIAN SUPPORT--ITS COOPERATION ESPECIALLY WITH GREECE AND TURKEY AND WITH ROMANIA IT MAINTAINS CLOSE LINKS.

4. IN SUCH AREAS AS TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS, ENERGY ETC. BULGARIA IS ALREADY INVOLVED QUITE DEEPLY WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. OTHER FIELDS MENTIONED IN ATHENS ARE COVERED BY THE ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G., ENVIRONMENT--HOW MUCH REAL BENEFIT WOULD COME FROM A BALKAN ARRANGEMENT ON SUCH A SUBJECT?) OR ARE SUSCEPTIBLE OF EFFECTIVE TREATMENT BY BILATERAL MEANS. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIET UNION AND BULGARIA MAY NOT BE PREPARED FOR THE LATTER TO PARTICIPATE IN INSTITUTIONALIZED BALKAN COOPERATION, THE POINT IS THAT AS WE SEE IT

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BULGARIA LOSES VERY LITTLE, IS CONFRONTED BY NO DILEMMA, AND POSES NONE TO THE USSR.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLICIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SOFIA00570
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760100-0655
From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760351/aaaabssz.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 46523, 76 MOSCOW 3562
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 APR 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET DILEMMA IN BALKANS?
TAGS: PFOR, XG, UR, BU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006